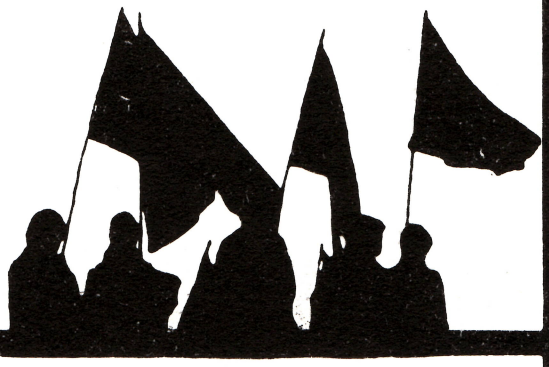
ANARCHIST LABOR BULLETIN



A Publication of the Anarchist Labor Network

NUMBER 16 JANUARY $1.00

IWA Conference on Eastern Europe

On October 6-8 1989, delegates from five European Sections of the International Workers Association, as well as a delegate from SMOT (USSR) met in Ahrdorf, West Germany to discuss the current situation in Eastern Europe. Delegates from the NSF (Norway) and the CNT-F (France) gave detailed reports on the events in Poland and their own contacts with groups inside that country. The NSF has been working with other Norwegian unionists in supporting the efforts of the Polish working class, and they have sent over more than 200 printing machines since 1980. The delegate from the NSF gave the following personal evaluation of the process in Poland:

In 1981 Solidarnosc had been everything: a union, a political party, a social movement, an organization of intellectuals, with over 10 million members. In 82-83 Lech Walesa began to create his own internal structure within Solidarnosc, the TKK (coordination committee). The members of the TKK were not elected but appointed by Walesa. By 87 solidarnosc had

cont. pg.5

The Direct Action Committee of the San Francisco Tenants Union is conducting preliminary research into the feasibility of launching a city-wide rent strike. The strike's purpose would be to address the ridiculous cost of housing in San Francisco, which has left thousands homeless and thousands more living in high-priced sub-standard housing.

SFTU estimates that they will need pledges of support from at least 20,000 SF tenants to launch a successful strike. They are also advocating that homeowners (average cost of a house in SF: $320,000) join in the strike by withholding mortgage payments. From TENANT TIMES, SFTU's quarterly publication: " We feel that the traditional avenues have failed tenants, and that the crisis of increasing homelessness demands stronger tactics...It's clear that electing Agnos,

cont. 8

Pittston Agreement

As this issue of the ALB goes to the printer, the United Mine Workers rank and file is reviewing the settlement reached between union negotiators and the Pittston Coal Company. As of yet no details of the agreement are available, although UMW president Richard Trumpka is calling the settlement a victory. We might also recall that the leadership of CWA claimed victory in the NYNEX strike on the East Coast. In the NYNEX settlement, workers managed to retain the health benefits the company was trying to steal, but in return the union bureaucrats bargained away a 25% wage cut and gave the company the right to fire workers who had acted agressively on the picket lines. Some 'victory'.

For the business unions, these days merely surviving a strike is a 'victory'. These 'victorys' are almost always won at the expense of the rank and file.

In the February issue of the ALB we will run our take on the many strikes of 1989, which turned out to be a year of militant labor activity the like of which most of us have never seen.

Remember, Eastern Airlines machinists are STILL on the picket line. As a show of solidarity, we reccomend that supporters call the airline and make last minute first class or business class reservations for busy commuter flights in your area.

RANDOM DRUG TESTING

Despite opposition from the Transport Workers Union, MUNI management and the city's board of Supervisors, workers on San Francsico's Municipal Railway will be forced to submit to the will and whim of the federal government and piss in a bottle on demand. As of Decemeber 21st, the tests are required of 3000 MUNI workers, including drivers, mechanics and safety workers. Federal requirements mandate "spot checks" for 50% of the workforce. In the case of MUNI, this means that 1500 workers anually, or 4 per day, will be pulled off the job and ordered to take a whiz for the War on Dope. The tests include marijauna, cocaine and amphetimines, but oddly enough do not include alcohol (lest we catch some high-paid executive in one of their 12 martini lunches?)

The tests being used have an error rating of up to 66%, which most reasonable people feel is too wide a margin to base someone's livelihood on. Likewise, the current testing procedures and laboratorys are largely unmonitored.

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HOUSTON PLASTICS FIRE

On October 23rd the huge Philips Petroleum Company Houston plant exploded in a ball of fire causing the deaths of 14 and injuring another 124. All those who were either killed or injured are members of Local 4-227 of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Union.

As the facts of this tragic explosion become available, we see that the blame should not be laid at the feet of the workers, but rather it was the greed of Philips who set the stage for this disastor.

According to Local 4-227, Philips (unfortunately with concessions given by the local union) has been contracting out most maintenance work, eliminated relief crews and forced workers to work excessive overtime while paring their staff to the "bare bones".

It is unfortunate that it must take the deaths of workers to point to the nature of concessions, that corporate greed and a system not controlled by the workers is just plain wrong.

Mike Harris

NO MORE PAY TO PLAY!

The International Music Workers Union has lended it's support to the growing opposition to the "Pay-to-Play" venues in the punk scene. "Pay-to-Play is where the clubs in question actually charge the bands who put on shows for the use of the stage space. This means that the clubs, rather than just getting the musicians to play for free (which has become a common practice) actually take money right out of the musician's pockets! Meanwhile, the clubs continue to rake in their usual high profits from the sale of liqour and beer.

On Friday December 21st the IMWU organized a picket of The Stone in San Francisco's North Beach district. 20-30 union members and supporters carried signs and passed-out literature on the sidewalk in front of the club. In the course of the picket, the owner of the Stone came out and heaped a tremendous amount of verbal abuse upon the picketers, who naturally returned it in kind.

Since the establishment of a local in the Bay Area, the IMWU has continued it's on-going work of organizing alternative shows for independent bands, as well as their unfaltering opposition to nazi infiltration of the punk music scene.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
12 issues-$10.00
6 issues-$6.00
to:
Incendiary Publications
P.O. Box 210095
San Francisco, CA.
94121-0095

INDEPENDENT COURIER ASSOCIATION, NYC

The ICA was formed at a raucous meeting of 50 bike messengers in the Spring of 1984 when they were faced with licensing. The ICA defeated the provisons which said they'd have to wear uniforms as well as other licensing requiremnts.

They have fought helmet laws, outlawing of "breakless" track bikes, the "bike ban", and police harrassment. They have fought all attempts to make messenger licensing more severe.

It is the policy of the ICA to promote workers rights in the messenger companies (such as workers compensation for bike couriers) and they join in many environmental, pro-bike, pro-clean air activities. They also publish the newsletter ICA NEWS and organize social functions (biker-bashes) for their membership.

They are the voice of bike messengers in NYC recognized by government agencies, messenger companies and the media. They are part of the Bike Advisory Committee which brings together Dept. of Transportation officials , messengers, advocates of alternative transportation, the cops, and others to discuss and debate bike policy in NYC.

The ICA is part of an informal network of messengers from around the United States, Toronto and London. From the December 89 issue of ICA NEWS: " We have regular meetings but are an informal group with no 'leaders' or any other shit. We're open to anything messengers want to do to promote the general good of us all."

The ICA can be contacted by writing: Bob McGlynn 528 5th St., Brooklyn, NY. 11215

A BAD BAYH FOR HOOSIER PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Evan Bayh was elected governor of Indiana in 1987 while campaigning with a promise to enact a bill allowing for collective bargaining by public employees. After a year without fulfilling this promise, dues hungry unions are pressuring for the governor to act. AFSCME, the Teamsters, and ISEA (allied to the American Federation of Teachers) are involved in campaigns to carve up the dues pie. The Teamsters, whose political support for Bayh's election was conspicuous, are most heavily supported in the Highway Department. ISEA is supported in the Department of Welfare and Corrections, while AFSCME has scattered supporters in many areas.

The right of state employees to collective bargaining is no where ensured by law. Neither is any kind of democracy ensured. Which union represents which workers may have nothing to do with what those workers want. The legislation which will effect our union "rights" will be drawn up by the political party that wants the biggest chunk of our union dues contributed to thier campaigns by a business union that may not be demorcratically chosen by the workers it represents.

There is no question that Indiana Public Employees need unions to represent them. Caseworkers in the Indiana Department of Welfare are the lowest paid in the nation, trailing behind the lowest paid southern states by hundreds of dollars.

If you're a public employee interested in communicating with other public employees in the Anarchist Labor Network, please write:
WSA Midwest Region
c/o Nick Keirn
347 W. Suttenfield
Ft. Wayne, IN 46807
or call:
(219) 745-3217 (sorry, no collect)

"DISPOSABLE WORKERS"

Add this term to your vocabulary: "Disposable workers."

According to a leading capitalist magazine, FORTUNE, the 1980's has been labeled the decade of the "disposable workers". Disposable workers is simply the new term for temporary, part-time, contingent or short term workers.

According to BUSINESS WEEK nearly 9 out of 10 companies use disposable workers. These workers are hired because they reduce wage and fringe benefit costs and are often non-union.

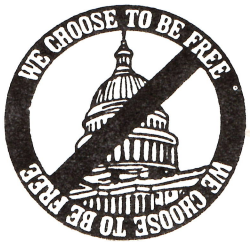
While it's true this is not a new phenomenon, such use has increased dramitcally since 1980. In 1988 for example, close to 37 million workers were employed as temporaries and more than half of all job growth between 1980 and 1988 has been in contingent work. Under the capitalist system it's not suprising then to learn that 64% of all disposable workers are women and African-Americans comprise 20% of such workers.

Lastly, one of the largest growing industries in the US is the temporary agencies such as Kelly Services and Manpower. This industry has grown at a rate of 175% between 1980 and 1988.

I would submit to you that it's about time we dispose of a system that continues to keep the already oppressed women and minorities that much further oppressed.

Mike Harris

ABSOLUTELY



NO GOVERNMENT

ANARCHIST FEDERATION OF ITALY

The Carrara branch of the Anarchist Federation of Italy is facing eviction from the building they have been occupying since 1945. The attempts by government officials to seize the structure have forced the FAI comrades to maintain a constant occupation of the building.

Carrara is known to most of the world for it's famous marble. Few people, however, know that the workers in the quarries are (and for many decades have been) mostly anarchists. The anarchists of the area were among the first to take up arms against fascist rule and are highly respected among the local people for their anti-fascist, pro-working class history. Letters of solidarity and support should be sent to: FAI, Piazza Pinelli, Carrara, ITALY

CONFERENCE ON WORKERS SELF-ORGANIZATION

The second Conference on Workers Self-Organization will be held this year on the weekend following Mayday in Minneapolis. The 1988 conference was held in St. Louis, By holding the conference in a different city the organizers hope to attract a broad spectrum of groups and individuals who support the working class organizing itself and creating a new, free society. For more information contact:

WORKERS DEMOCRACY
P.O. BOX 24115
ST. LOUIS, MO. 63130

IWA CONFERENCE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

been reduced to between 600-800,000 members, many rather close to anarcho-syndicalism in their views. The union was smaller but it was locally organized and controlled. In 89 Walesa began his negotiations with the government. An election committee was formed and the foreign office was created in Warsaw with 200 employees. The bulk of foreign aid was channeled through this office. To circumvent this centralization, the Norwegian comrades made contacts with regional structures. They stress the necessity to maintain contacts with local union branches in Poland. There is a strong element within Solidarnosc against becoming a political party. They feel that unless there is a congress (and soon) Solidarnosc will split.

The comrade from the French CNT reported on the MA, the national anarchist organization in Poland. In his opinion the young workers who made the strikes in 1989 have never been in Solidarnosc. They attack both the state and the Solidarnosc bureacracy.

Reports were also given on contacts in East Germany, with delegates from the FAU (W. Germany) annoucing the existance of a libertarian group that has expressed interest in anarcho-syndicalism.

The IWA Secretariat reported on their meeting with the representative from SMOT (Free Interprofessional Union of Workers) in Paris a few days before the conference. The meeting was very positive and constructive (a delegate from SMOT attended the conference). Asked for an evaluation of the current situation in the USSR, she gave this summary:

The miner's strikes were fairly calm ones. As a result of their action, they received very little from the government, but it will be 1-2 years before the people understand this. SMOT is awaiting more strikes. The political situation in the USSR has improved, they can even distribute their own bulletins without problems. But the economic situation is worse than it was five years ago. There is a shortage of basic food stuffs. Many people still try to get everything from (or through) the state.

From: INFO, a newsletter published by the IWA Secretariat.

LETTERS

Mike:

Learning from History was a VERY good piece! The Maximoff qoute was great. The stuff about hina and the USSR by Tom was good too. Thing is, we aren't too happy about all this non-anarchist union news. There's too much of it in the ALB and without any critical analysis of those union's bureaucratic bumblings--like co-opting to the CIA-front AFL-CIO. These unions have little use for us. Beyond supporting the general struggle of the workers in those unions, we should only be analyzing the failure of these unions to foment revolution. We should be openly embracing the dissidents of the rank and file. The anarchist element seems to get washed away in the Labor Movement already. As with statist communism as opposed to stateless communism, we need to sharpen this point in the ALB. The remarks made in FACTSHEET 5 (concerning the ALB) made us feel rather silly, so we wanted to raise the matter here.

We also wanted to know why the WSA doesn't communicate with us directly on what events they have going on? Also, why is the IWW doing music benefits without even letting us know about them so that we could also participate (we are a music workers union, do they know that?). We wrote the United Mine Workers about doing a benefit for them, and here the IWW does one and doesn't tell us about it! The UMW never acknowledged our contact anyway. They probably freaked on the posters we sent them.

We would also like to see more on the on-going debate within the IWW about it's involvement with the neo-nazi linked Earth First!, the problems with the IWW newspaper about this, and why the ALB should NOT be involved with EARTH FIRST!ers. We demand an explaination from the IWW about this continuing cover-up of anti-immigrant and pro-AIDS positions of the EF! founding chapter in Arizona. Also, when the FAU comrade was here (in SF) WHY were we not invited to meet with him?! Their paper, DIREKTE AKTION, did a piece on IMWU a couple of years ago.

It just seems to us the IWW and WSA remain aloof to what is going on locally on the streets with us, which is a lot more than just fighting goons! "Pay-to-Play" boycotts start here December 22. We have a series of shows we are doing with NAPP. We have gigs planned for Martin Luther King day with RAR. And our on-going Picnics at the Ocean which we will start having a generator there for Live Hitt & Run Beach Party gigs.

Ron Gould, IMWU

Mike:

I fairly recently joined the IWW and, at the Anarchist Conference, first came across the tensions between the IWW and the WSA (or members thereof). I am unaware of the history and full ramifications of this tension, but got the feeling--through talking with other Wobblies--that much of the tension was based on personality conflicts. Unfortunately, bickering and perosnalities have destroyed more than one organization and/or movement. I just came across WSA at the conference and am still learning about them. As an anarchist, a student and a wage slave, I would hope that what we (IWW and WSA) have in common far outweighs our differences. In short, I see the importance of uniting in struggle and do not wish to get caught up in petty infighting.

I would also like more information on organizing drives that WSA has been involved with (i.e. Office Workers United). This includes details of

organizing efforts (strategies and tactics) as well as how these efforts have been organizationally structured. The information on internal decision making is of particular interest to me.

I am a student at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) and have been working with other students for the last 2-3 years on a Student Union (a project where the current hieracrhical student government would be replaced with a Student Union based upon participatory democracy). A detailed model has been created and an organizing drive is planned for this academic year. Only with directly democratic decision-making can students challenge the powers that be and begin to take control over their own lives. A few anarchists have worked with the Student Union but most are not (at least as of yet). I see the student union as relevent to anarchism and anarchist labor for the following reasons. First, students are a class of mental workers that are not only uncompensated for their labor, but have to pay to develop their skills. (This is like an apprentice having to pay in order to learn their trade). Moreover, many students are forced to be wage workers in order to pay for their education. The remainder of students are future wage workers (those that do not enter management positions after graduation). Thus students, by definition, are uncompensated mental workers, wage workers, and/or future wage workers.

Second, I believe that only by building participatory democracy into our everyday lives will we ever be able to build a lasting anarchist society. For example, a major reason for the brief success of the Spanish Revolution was the fact that anarchism had been discussed and, to some degree, practiced for over 60 years prior to 1936.

Thus, the special status of students as a unique brand of workers coupled with the need to build a culture of participatory democracy results in the Student Union being closely tied with anarchism and anarchist labor.

Dave Karoly

ANARCHIST NEWSPAPER LAUNCHED

The Anarchist Newspaper Conference met in Chicago over the weekend of Novembr 24 and 25 to launch a monthly anarchist newspaper. Over 50 people attended the conference which was hosted by the Hayday Anarchists of Chicago.

At the confrence it was decided that the newspaper production group would be located in New York and that Ned Day of Minneapolis' RABL group would relocate and become the newspaper's paid facilitator. An Editorial Council comprising 15 members was chosen from the conference attendees. The Editorial Council will meet several times a year and will constitute the highest decison-making group of the newspaper project. A monthly budget of $2100 was proposed and adopted at the confrence, with attendees pledging $1863 a month toward that budget.

A name was also chosen for the paper, "LOVE AND RAGE" with a cover price of $1.00. The first meeting of the Editorial Council has been sheduled for January 13 and 14 in Knoxville, where final production and format decisions will be made.

WORKPLACE ORGANIZING

A very interesting booklet comes to us from WORK RIGHTS PRESS entitled " The Legal Rights of Union Stewards". This booklet examines and explains stewards, officers and committeepersons rights under labor law. Although this booklet is written simply within the confines of NLRB rules and procedures, it

cont. pg. 8

Industrial Workers of the World

LABOR IS ENTITLED TO ALL IT CREATES

SAN FRANCISCO GMB
POB 40485
San Francisco, CA
94140

NEW YORK GMB
Box 183
New York, NY
10028

CHICAGO GMB
3435 N. Sheffield #202
Chicago, IL. 60657

ATLANTA GROUP
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Atlanta, GA.
30308-0766

VANCOUVER GMB
BOX 65635 Stn. F
Vancouver B.C.
V5N 5K5 CANADA

TORONTO GMB
26A Oxford St
Toronto, ONT
M5T 1N9 CANADA

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC WORKERS UNION

IMWU

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San Francisco, CA
94101-1162

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2924 Grand S.
Minneapolis, MN
55408

IMWU VIRGINIA
1918 Tucker Lane
Salem, VA
24153

IMWU TENNESSEE
701 Hardwick Rd.
Knoxville, TN
37923

IMWU CANADA
POB 2541 Stn D.
Ottawa, ONT
K1P 5W6 CANADA

WSA

WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

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PO Box 40400
San Francisco, CA 94140

International Secretary:
WSA International Secretary
339 Lafayette St. Room 202
New York, NY 10012

Latin American Solidarity Working Group
c/o WSA, PO Box 1197
San Antonio, TX 78294

WSA East Tennessee Group
c/o Box 8436
U.T. Station
Knoxville 37996-4900

International Workers Association

A.I.T.

Asociacion Internacional de los Trabajadores

OWU

OFFICE WORKERS UNITED

P.O. BOX 210095
SAN FRANCISCO, CA.
94121-0095

Anarchist Labor Network

The Anarchist Labor Network was formed at the 1989 Anarchist Conference in San Francisco. The purpose of the network is to facilitate communication and cooperation among Anarchist Unionists in North America and elsewhere. If you are interested in participating in the ALN write to: Anarchist Labor Network, POB 210095, San Francisco, CA 94121-0095

WORKPLACE ORGANIZING CONT.

does a good job in allowing elected shopfloor representatives to see what sort of confines exist within the legal system.

Some interesting questions examined are: Can a steward call the boss a liar? Can the company charge the union with the costs of supplying information? Can a worker refuse to answer questions if management calls them at home? Can a criminal conviction (such as picket line violence) bar a union member from running for steward?

This booklet makes a good companion to LABOR LAW FOR THE RANK AND FILER (available from both the WSA and the IWW for $2.50+ postage). THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF STEWARDS is available for $9.95 (postage included) from WORK RIGHTS PRESS, suite 133, 310 Franklin St., Boston, MA 02110.

DRUG TESTING CONT.

Many errors can result just from the nature of the tests themselves. Dristan nasal mist can read as amphetimines. Vicks formula 44 can show up as heroin. Nyquil can show up as methadone. The antibiotic Amoxicillin can show up as cocaine. It's very clear that these mandatory tests having NOTHING to do with reducing drug abuse. They are a blatant attack on the basic rights of privacy of us all, and a grand gesture of subjigation from the ruling class to those of us who do the work.

A book, "Conquering the Urine Tests" is available for $5. To order call 1-800-333-2152

RENT STRIKE CONT.

putting a vacancy control initiativeon the ballot and waiting for a sympathetic majority on the Board of Supervisors has gotten us nowhere."
For more info contact:
SF TENANTS UNION
558 CAPP STREET
SAN FRANCSICO, CA
94110